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Grant A. Johnson
IBM Corporation - Dept. 917
3605 Highway 52 North
Rochester, MN 55901

EXAMINER

KRISCIUNAS, LINDA MARY

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3623

DATE MAILED: 07/28/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/068,033

Applicant(s)

CRAGUN ET AL.

Examiner

Linda Krisciunas

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 22 June 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-41 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-41 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

1. The following is a Non-Final office action in response to the amendments filed by the applicant on June 22, 2006. Claims 1-41 are pending. Claims 14, 25 and 26 were amended.

Response to Amendment

2. The applicant's amendments are deemed to be for clarification purposes and do not impact the claim limitations.
3. The Examiner notes the submission of an updated Figure 5A filed June 22, 2006.

Response to Arguments

4. The Examiner has fully considered the applicant's arguments and they are deemed persuasive. A new art rejection has been made. In the applicant's arguments it is asserted that all of the attendee group categories (delegates, representatives, quorums and teams data) are present and required for claim 1 and subsequently claims 30 and 41. It is unclear if all of the attendee category items are required or if the system is capable of using all of these categories, but they are not all required. In addition, claim 3, for example, lists that all these attendee categories are required and since claim 3 is dependent on claim 1, claim 1 should be broader in scope than its dependent claims, which in turn would lead one to believe that the attendee category listing in claim 1 would not be required. Clarification is required, as described in the new 112 second paragraph asserted below.
5. All statements of Official Notice made in the art rejection have been on record since issuance of the Non-Final office action rejection mailed on March 23, 2006, and in

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the subsequent response filed on June 22, 2006 the Applicant was silent on the matter of Official Notice. Consequently, the statements of Official Notice made in the art rejection have been established as admitted prior art due to Applicant's failure to adequately traverse the Examiner's assertions of Official Notice.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

6. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

7. Claims 1-41 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. It is unclear if all of the attendee category items are required or if the system is capable of using all of these categories, but they are not all required. In addition, claim 3, for example, lists that all these attendee categories are required and since claim 3 is dependent on claim 1, claim 1 should be broader in scope than its dependent claims, which in turn would lead one to believe that the attendee category listing in claim 1 would not be required. Clarification is required.

In addition, the Specification lists on page 6, lines 29-30 that the additional categories of attendee groups includes delegates, representatives, quorums and teams data. Therefore, so long as attendee information is present, the exact category of what it is called is not critical to the functioning of the scheduling system.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

8. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

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(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

9. Claims 1-41 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Comny et al (US 6,101,480) in view of "Microsoft Outlook 97 Administrator's Guide", Microsoft Corporation, 1997; hereinafter referred to as "Outlook 97".

As per claims 1 and 30, Comny teaches storing meeting settings and invitees data for a meeting (See Figure 6 where the invitees and the meeting settings are listed. See also column 3, lines 29-37.); meeting settings and invitee data includes an invitee attendance type (column 6, lines 60-67 where a required or optional attendee would constitute an attendance type); identifying a solution time block for automated meeting scheduling including at least a subset of a plurality of selected invitees utilizing said stored invitee attendance type and other stored meeting data (column 6, lines 35: (108) best fit, where the best time is chosen based upon invitee availability). Comny does not explicitly teach the attendee categories of delegates, representatives, quorums and team data. Outlook 97 teaches that it is known to have delegates and team data (page 117 where the workgroup member category represents the team data category and the use of delegates is taught.). Outlook is an analogous art as it also teaches about scheduling meetings. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the scheduling system of Comny with the delegate and team data categories of Outlook 97 to provide means for further defining the meeting and ensuring accuracy of the appropriate people present at the meeting.

Official notice is taken that it is old and well known to use representatives at meetings to provide means for efficiently conveying information to a group of people, whereby it is not efficient for every member of every group to attend every meeting, therefore a representative is assigned to attend and report back on the information obtained to the group. This is supported by articles such as: page 1014 of "Eliciting public values for complex policy decisions" by Keeney et al., Management Science, September 1990. Official notice is also taken that it is old and well known for meetings to have quorums to insure that enough members are present at the meeting for potential decision making or other meeting matters. This assertion is supported by articles such as: page 275 of "Multi-agent based decision mechanism for distributed meeting scheduling system" by Ashir et al, IEEE, 1997. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the attendee data of Comny with the additional representative and quorum categories to provide means for further defining the meeting and ensuring accuracy of the appropriate people and number of people being present for the meeting.

As per claims 2 and 31, Comny teaches identifying said solution time block for automated meeting scheduling including at least said subset of a plurality of selected invitees includes the steps of identifying said subset of said plurality of selected invitees including at least one of an identified minimum number of said plurality of selected invitees (column 6, lines 35: (108) best fit, where the best time is chosen based upon invitee availability); a substitute for one or more of said plurality of selected invitees (column 9, line 28, where a delegate can be indicated which is equivalent to a

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substitute.). Conmy does not explicitly teach a quorum for a meeting scheduled. Official notice is taken that it is old and well known that a minimum or quorum of attendees is required as indicated on page 275 of "Multi-agent based decision mechanism for distributed meeting scheduling system" by Ashir et al, IEEE, 1997. In order for a meeting to take place a minimum of two people would be required. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate a minimum or quorum number of invitees to have a meeting to provide a method for determining whether a meeting could be realized.

As per claims 3 and 32, Conmy teaches the steps of storing a required time period for said meeting, an earliest meeting date; a latest meeting date (column 2, lines 19-33, where the system finds the best fit time and other options based upon the weighting of the invitees and their availability. Therefore, an early and a late time would be indicated.); and said selected invitees to said meeting (column 2, lines 34-51, where the system contains the profiles of the invitees and utilizes this information to plan a meeting.).

As per claim 4, Conmy teaches calculating a selection score for each potential time block for automated meeting scheduling utilizing said stored meeting settings and invitees data including said invitee attendance type (column 6, lines 34-54, where the system weights, which requires a scoring system, the invitees and resources for the meeting and provides a best fit option as well as other potential options. See also fit determination unit (308)).

However, Comny does not teach delegates, representatives, quorums and teams data as previously discussed above in claim 1. Outlook 97 teaches that it is known to have delegates and team data (page 117 where the workgroup member category represents the team data category and the use of delegates is taught.). Outlook is an analogous art as it also teaches about scheduling meetings. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the scheduling system of Comny with the delegate and team data categories of Outlook 97 to provide means for further defining the meeting and ensuring accuracy of the appropriate people present at the meeting.

Official notice is taken that it is old and well known to use representatives at meetings to provide means for efficiently conveying information to a group of people, whereby it is not efficient for every member of every group to attend every meeting, therefore a representative is assigned to attend and report back on the information obtained to the group. This is supported by articles such as: page 1014 of "Eliciting public values for complex policy decisions" by Keeney et al., Management Science, September 1990. Official notice is also taken that it is old and well known for meetings to have quorums to insure that enough members are present at the meeting for potential decision making or other meeting matters. This assertion is supported by articles such as: page 275 of "Multi-agent based decision mechanism for distributed meeting scheduling system" by Ashir et al, IEEE, 1997. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the attendee data of Comny with the additional representative and quorum categories to

provide means for further defining the meeting and ensuring accuracy of the appropriate people and number of people being present for the meeting.

As per claim 5, Conmy teaches sorting said potential time blocks for automated meeting scheduling by highest calculated selection scores (column 6, lines 34-45, where the best fit option is produced which would produce the highest score.).

As per claims 6 and 33, Conmy teaches the steps of identifying said solution block for automated meeting scheduling including at least said subset of said plurality of selected invitees utilizing said calculated selection score for each potential time block (column 6, lines 34-54, where the system weights, which requires a scoring of sorts, the invitees and resources for the meeting and provides a best fit option as well as other potential options. See also fit determination unit (308)).

As per claim 7, Conmy teaches the step of calculating said selection score for each potential time block for automated meeting scheduling includes the steps of identifying a potential time block marked as unusable and setting said selection score to unusable (See busytime creation unit (304) and column 4, lines 56-67, where the busytime unit determines the times that each invitee is busy or the times that are unusable for that person since they are busy.).

As per claims 8, 10, 16, 34 and 36-40, Conmy teaches the step of calculating said selection score for each potential time block for automated meeting scheduling includes the steps of increasing said selection score for each available member (See column 6, lines 38-45, where weights are assigned based upon the importance or required feature of an invitee. The room and the chairman will receive a higher

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weighting since they are required. Additional invitees can be indicated as required and given a higher rating, this would be equivalent to scoring a quorum member higher as it performs an identical function in substantially the same manner with substantially the same results. All required members would be indicated by their score value.). Comny does not explicitly teach a quorum or checking for a quorum of available quorum members, as previously discussed in claim 1. Official notice is also taken that it is old and well known for meetings to have quorums to insure that enough members are present at the meeting for potential decision making or other meeting matters. This assertion is supported by articles such as: page 275 of "Multi-agent based decision mechanism for distributed meeting scheduling system" by Ashir et al, IEEE, 1997. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the attendee data of Comny with the additional representative and quorum categories to provide means for further defining the meeting and ensuring accuracy of the appropriate people and number of people being present for the meeting.

As per claims 9, 17 and 35, Comny teaches responsive to identifying less than said quorum of available members, of setting said selection score to unusable (column 6, lines 46-54, where the unavailability weighting is used to score the unavailability of an invitee and their relative importance to the meeting. The factors are additive with the higher value indicating the less available the time slot. See also column 7, lines 18-33, where the system reduces the number of invitees by removing the invitee with the lowest weighting and re-checking the time slot with these invitees until a list is found that can fit the time interval. This is presented to the coordinator as an alternative to the best fit

option. If the members that are required for the meeting are not included in the invitee list as the end of this reduction process, the meeting will not be able to be held.

Therefore there is a required minimum of invitees needed for the meeting which is equivalent to a quorum as it performs an identical function in substantially the same manner with substantially the same results.). Comny does not explicitly teach quorum members as previously discussed in claim 1. Official notice is also taken that it is old and well known for meetings to have quorums to insure that enough members are present at the meeting for potential decision making or other meeting matters. This assertion is supported by articles such as: page 275 of "Multi-agent based decision mechanism for distributed meeting scheduling system" by Ashir et al, IEEE, 1997.

Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the attendee data of Comny with the additional representative and quorum categories to provide means for further defining the meeting and ensuring accuracy of the appropriate people and number of people being present for the meeting.

As per claim 11, Comny teaches responsive to identifying said required attendee is not available (column 4, lines 54-55, where the availability time for each invitee is retrieved from the database), of checking for each available member for identifying an available member (column 9, lines 23-34, where a delegate may be indicated). Comny does not explicitly teach a delegate as previously discussed in claim 1. Outlook 97 teaches that it is known to have delegates (page 117 where the use of delegates is taught.). Outlook is an analogous art as it also teaches about scheduling meetings. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the

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invention to modify the scheduling system of Comny with the delegate feature of Outlook 97 to provide means for ensuring accurate representation of members at the meeting.

As per claim 12, Comny teaches responsive to not identifying an available member, of setting said selection score to unusable (column 9, lines 23-34. One option is to indicate a member. Another is to decline or re-schedule. If an invitee declines they are unable to make the meeting their score would be low and according to column 7, lines 18-33, the lowest score is dropped from the invitee list which is equivalent to it being unusable.). Comny does not explicitly teach a delegate as previously discussed in claim 1. Outlook 97 teaches that it is known to have delegates (page 117 where the use of delegates is taught.). Outlook is an analogous art as it also teaches about scheduling meetings. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the scheduling system of Comny with the delegate feature of Outlook 97 to provide means for ensuring accurate representation of members at the meeting.

As per claims 13-14, Comny teaches responsive to identifying a member (column 9, lines 23-34, where a delegate may be indicated), checking for requires consultation (the delegated person is now one of the invitees and needs to respond to the invite the same as the invitee as indicated in column 12, lines 2-4), and responsive to not identifying requires consultation, increasing said selection score by an identified member value (See column 6, lines 38-45, where weights are assigned based upon the importance or required feature of an invitee. The room and the chairman will receive a

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higher weighting since they are required. Additional invitees can be indicated as required and given a higher rating.); and storing said identified available member (column 11, lines 47-51, where the user can delegate the assignment and it's part of the Notes Mail system which includes a database for maintaining all the information.).

Conmy does not explicitly teach a delegate as previously discussed in claim 1. Outlook 97 teaches that it is known to have delegates (page 117 where the use of delegates is taught.). Outlook is an analogous art as it also teaches about scheduling meetings.

Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the scheduling system of Conmy with the delegate feature of Outlook 97 to provide means for ensuring accurate representation of members at the meeting.

As per claim 15, Conmy teaches calculating said selection score for each potential time block for automated meeting scheduling includes the steps increasing said selection score for each available team member (See column 6, lines 38-45, where weights are assigned based upon the importance or required feature of an invitee. The room and the chairman will receive a higher weighting since they are required. Additional invitees can be indicated as required and given a higher rating, this would be equivalent to scoring a team member higher as it performs an identical function in substantially the same manner with substantially the same results); and storing a list of available team members (column 2, lines 38-39 where a database keeps all the profile information of the invitees, which includes the team members.).

As per claim 18, Conmy teaches checking for each individual consultant whether said individual consultant is available for consultation (column 6, lines 35: (108) best fit, where the best time is chosen based upon invitee availability, where the invitee can be a consultant.). Conmy does not explicitly teach responsive to identifying said threshold number of available team members. Official notice is taken that it is old and well known that a minimum or threshold or quorum of attendees is required. In order for a meeting to take place a minimum of two people would be required as indicated on page 275 of "Multi-agent based decision mechanism for distributed meeting scheduling system" by Ashir et al, IEEE, 1997. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate a minimum or quorum number of invitees to have a meeting to provide a method for determining whether a meeting could be realized.

As per claim 19, Conmy teaches responsive to identifying said individual consultant is not available for consultation, of setting said selection score to unusable (column 4, lines 54-55, where the availability time for each invitee is retrieved from the database and see busytme creation unit (304) and column 4, lines 56-67, where the busytme unit determines the times that each invitee is busy or the times that are unusable for that person since they are busy).

As per claim 20, Conmy teaches increasing said selection score for each team member consulting (See column 6, lines 38-45, where weights are assigned based upon the importance or required feature of an invitee. The room and the chairman will receive a higher weighting since they are required. Additional invitees can be indicated

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as required and given a higher rating, this would be equivalent to scoring a quorum member higher as it performs an identical function in substantially the same manner with substantially the same results. All required members would be indicated by their score value). Conmy does not explicitly teach checking for a threshold number of team members consulting. Official notice is taken that it is old and well known that a minimum or threshold or quorum of attendees is required. In order for a meeting to take place a minimum of two people would be required as indicated on page 275 of "Multi-agent based decision mechanism for distributed meeting scheduling system" by Ashir et al, IEEE, 1997. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate a minimum or quorum number of invitees to have a meeting to provide a method for determining whether a meeting could be realized.

As per claim 21, Conmy teaches setting said selection score to unusable (column 4, lines 54-55, where the availability time for each invitee is retrieved from the database and see busytime creation unit (304) and column 4, lines 56-67, where the busytime unit determines the times that each invitee is busy or the times that are unusable for that person since they are busy). Conmy does not explicitly teach responsive to identifying less than said threshold number of team members consulting. Official notice is taken that it is old and well known that a minimum or threshold or quorum of attendees is required. In order for a meeting to take place a minimum of two people would be required as indicated on page 275 of "Multi-agent based decision mechanism for distributed meeting scheduling system" by Ashir et al, IEEE, 1997. Therefore it would

have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate a minimum or quorum number of invitees to have a meeting to provide a method for determining whether a meeting could be realized.

As per claim 22, Conmy teaches the step of identifying said solution time block for automated meeting scheduling including at least said subset of said plurality of selected invitees utilizing said invitee attendance type, delegates, representatives, quorums, and teams data includes the steps of performing an approve meeting routine for a solution time block (See column 6, lines 34-45, where the best fit option is selected (see Figure 3)); and checking for a scheduled status responsive to performing said approve meeting routine (column 8, lines 8-25, where the status is indicated by the shading of the boxes.).

As per claim 23, Conmy teaches responsive to identifying said scheduled status, of performing a finalize meeting routine (See Figure 9, where the final time is selected based upon it being "ok for everyone").

As per claim 24, Conmy teaches responsive to not identifying said scheduled status, of releasing blocked off time for said solution time block and marking said solution time block as unusable (See busytime creation unit (304) and column 4, lines 56-67, where the busytime unit determines the times that each invitee is busy or the times that are unusable for that person since they are busy.).

As per claim 25, Conmy teaches performing an approve meeting routine includes the steps for each attendee and consultant, of blocking off calendar for said solution time block and inviting each attendee and consultant (See column 6, lines 34-45, where

the best fit option is selected (see Figure 3) and column 8, lines 8-25, where the status is indicated by the shading of the boxes and see Figure 3, where an invitation is sent to each invitee. A consultant is understood to perform the same function as a representative and is therefore treated as such.). Comny does not explicitly teach a representative as previously discussed in claim 1. Official notice is taken that it is old and well known to use representatives at meetings to provide means for efficiently conveying information to a group of people, whereby it is not efficient for every member of every group to attend every meeting, therefore a representative is assigned to attend and report back on the information obtained to the group. This is supported by articles such as: page 1014 of "Eliciting public values for complex policy decisions" by Keeney et al., Management Science, September 1990.

As per claim 26, Comny teaches blocking off calendar for solution time block and inviting each attendee and consultant includes the steps blocking off calendar for said solution time block and inviting each delegate (See Figure 3 where an invitation is sent to each invitee and the invitee may send it to their delegate (column 9, lines 23-34, where a delegate may be indicated) and column 8, lines 8-25, where the status is indicated by the shading of the boxes). Comny does not explicitly teach a representative as previously discussed in claim 1. Official notice is taken that it is old and well known to use representatives at meetings to provide means for efficiently conveying information to a group of people, whereby it is not efficient for every member of every group to attend every meeting, therefore a representative is assigned to attend and report back on the information obtained to the group. This is supported by articles such as: page

1014 of "Eliciting public values for complex policy decisions" by Keeney et al.,
Management Science, September 1990.

As per claim 27, Conmy teaches steps for each team of identifying a number of team members to invite (column 3, lines 29-30, where the coordinator specifies the invitees); blocking off calendar for said solution time block and inviting said identified number of team members (column 8, lines 8-25, where the status of when the meeting is being held is indicated by the shading of the boxes and see Figure 3, where an invitation is sent to each invitee).

As per claim 28, Conmy teaches performing said finalize meeting routine includes the steps for each non-consulting attendees, of converting blocked off calendar for said solution time block to meeting time block (column 9, lines 30-34, where once the invite is accepted the calendar is updated with the information which would entail blocking off the time on the calendar as busy so that another meeting is not scheduled for that time slot.).

As per claim 29, Conmy teaches steps for each rescheduled meeting, of sending rescheduled notices (column 9, lines 58-60, where the meeting can be rescheduled and an invitation for the rescheduled event can be sent out.).

As per claim 41, Conmy teaches storing meeting settings and invitees data for a meeting (See Figure 6 where the invitees and the meeting settings are listed. See also column 3, lines 29-37); said meeting settings and invitees data including an invitee attendance type (column 6, lines 60-67 where a required or optional attendee constitutes an attendance type); calculating a selection score for each potential time

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block for automated meeting scheduling utilizing said stored meeting settings and invitees data including said invitee attendance type (column 6, lines 34-54, where the system weights, which requires a scoring system, the invitees and resources for the meeting and provides a best fit option as well as other potential options. See also fit determination unit (308)); and setting said selection score to unusable responsive to identifying an insufficient number of available team members (column 6, lines 46-54, where the unavailability weighting is used to score the unavailability of an invitee and their relative importance to the meeting. The factors are additive with the higher value indicating the less available the time slot. See also column 7, lines 18-33, where the system reduces the number of invitees by removing the invitee with the lowest weighting and re-checking the time slot with these invitees until a list is found that can fit the time interval. This is presented to the coordinator as an alternative to the best fit option. If the members that are required for the meeting are not included in the invitee list as the end of this reduction process, the meeting will not be able to be held. Therefore there is a required minimum of invitees needed for the meeting which is equivalent to a quorum as it performs an identical function in substantially the same manner with substantially the same results); or identifying an insufficient number of available consulting team members (column 7, lines 18-33, where the system reduces the number of invitees by removing the invitee with the lowest weighting and re-checking the time slot with these invitees until a list is found that can fit the time interval. This is presented to the coordinator as an alternative to the best fit option. If the members that are required for the meeting are not included in the invitee list as the end of this reduction process, the

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meeting will not be able to be held. Therefore there is a required minimum of invitees needed for the meeting which is equivalent to a quorum as it performs an identical function in substantially the same manner with substantially the same results. This would hold true whether it was a consulting member that was required or not. A consultant is understood to perform the same function as a representative and is therefore treated as such.); discarding each said potential time block having said selection score set to unusable (column 7, lines 18-33, the lowest score is dropped from the invitee list which is equivalent to it being unusable.); identifying a solution time block for automated meeting scheduling utilizing said invitee attendance type with said calculated selection score for each said potential time block (column 6, lines 34-54, where the system weights, which requires a scoring system, the invitees and resources for the meeting and provides a best fit option as well as other potential options. See also fit determination unit (308)).

Comny does not explicitly teach the attendee categories of delegates representatives, quorums and team data. Outlook 97 teaches that it is known to have delegates and team data (page 117 where the workgroup member category represents the team data category and the use of delegates is taught.). Outlook is an analogous art as it also teaches about scheduling meetings. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the scheduling system of Comny with the delegate and team data categories of Outlook 97 to provide means for further defining the meeting and ensuring accuracy of the appropriate people present at the meeting.

Official notice is taken that it is old and well known to use representatives at meetings as indicated on page 1014 of "Eliciting public values for complex policy decisions" by Keeney et al., Management Science, September 1990. Official notice is also taken that it is old and well known for meetings to have quorums as indicated on page 275 of "Multi-agent based decision mechanism for distributed meeting scheduling system" by Ashir et al, IEEE, 1997. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the attendee data of Comny with the additional representative and quorum categories to provide means for further defining the meeting and ensuring accuracy of the appropriate people and number of people being present for the meeting.

Conclusion

10. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Linda Krisciunas whose telephone number is 571-272-6931. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday, 6:30 am to 3:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tariq Hafiz can be reached on 571-272-6729. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Beth Van Doren
Beth Van Doren
AU 3623